

January 9, 2022

Dear Members of the Council,

My public comments concern the operational and financial impact on Novare Counseling Center, P.A., located at 557 West 7th Street, due to the Bigos Management and Nor-Son Construction building project. This letter will summarize the mental health services we provide to the community, project revenue losses and added expenses, and propose a solution involving the other parties. Despite my email attempts to discuss possible solutions with Bigos Management and Nor-Son Construction, no response has been made on their part as of January 9, 2022.

Novare Counseling Center, P.A. is a mental health clinic with seven clinicians, five offices, and we now do much of our work in person. In 2020, we provided 7,514 sessions and served a variety of mental health needs for individuals, couples, and families. The demand for mental health services remains high and more consumers are now looking for in-person versus telehealth. In addition to being the practice owner, I see clients and have experienced firsthand the impact of the construction noise levels. This impact applies to other staff as well. Please review the video recorded on 12/10/2021 by one of my employees that clearly demonstrates how the construction noise is unacceptable to providing services whether in person or online (telehealth).

In anticipation of continued service disruptions due to noise levels, I am attempting to find backup office space which will add an estimated rental expense of **\$1,300 to \$1,900 per month** to the existing rent of \$2,425 for five offices (557 7th Street West - existing location). Moving expenses could be as high as \$1,000. Revenue loss is uncertain pending how many offices we secure and how long the construction noise levels keep us from returning. Please note we currently operate with five offices and I only have three offices set for after January 15th. The ideal to minimize disruption of services and reduce revenue loss would be to secure five backup offices but finding additional space is posing a challenge. The more offices secured the fewer clients will postpone counseling until the construction is completed. Postponing, as you probably have surmised, means a loss of revenue for us. This loss falls both on me as the owner and employees who receive a split.

Section 8 housing provides an important service to the needs of the elderly and disabled and I realize there are limits to what can be done in the construction process. We also believe we are providing an important service to the community. The construction work must continue but I believe it is reasonable to ask Bigos Management to cover the additional expenses of backup rental space, moving expenses, and to cover lost revenue. Perhaps there is a modification that can be attached to the sound variance in this form? Although the sound variance end date is March 4, 2022, what can be done to monitor and ensure sound levels to establish that it is professionally suitable to return to the existing 557 building after this date? Both the covering of revenue losses and incurred expenses along with establishing a standard and procedure to ensure suitable noise levels after March 4th is my request to the council.

Sincerely,



Dan Stokman, MA, LPCC
Owner, Novare Counseling Center, P.A.